

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 DHA-02 ORM-02 SCA-01 VO-03

CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 DODE-00 AID-05 /043 W

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FM AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6596

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

INS/CO WASHDC

USMISSION GENEVA

CINCPAC

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SREF, MY

SUBJECT: WCRP VESSEL ROLAND AND BOAT CASE SITREP - EAST COAST
MALAYSIA

SUMMARY. GOM REPORTEDLY AGREEABLE TO ALLOWING ROLAND REFUGEES
ASHORE FOR INTERVIEWS AS TWO EMBASSY OFFICERS DEPART FOR
EAST COAST. SITUATION MADE MORE MANAGEABLE AS AUSTRALIA TAKES
172 REFUGEES. UNHCR HAS UNCONFIRMED REPORTS THAT
POSSIBLY 200 NEW REFUGEES HAVE ARRIVED IN KUALA ROMPIN
(BETWEEN KUANTAN AND MERSING) AREA -- INDICATING BOAT CASE
SEASON IS HERE AGAIN. END SUMMARY.

1. EMBOFF BUTCHER AND CONOFF ANDERSON PROCEEDING 3/23

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TO TRENGGANU ON EAST COAST TO INTERVIEW 313 REFUGEES AT
CAMP PUALU BESAR 30 MILES NORTH OF THERE. THIS NUMBER
INCLUDES THE 195 REFUGEES REMAINING ON THE WRCP SHIP
ROLAND WHO MALAYSIAN NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL HAS
AGREED MAY COME ASHORE FOR PROCESSING

2. WE ARE NOT CERTAIN AT THIS POINT IF REFUGEES WILL

BE RETURNED TO THE VESSEL AFTER THE INTERVIEWS ARE COMPLETED, WHICH MIGHT CREATE PROBLEM. BOTH WE AND THE UNHCR OFFICIALS HERE ARE HOPEFUL, HOWEVER, THAT THE NSC WILL TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO EASE OUT GRACEFULLY FROM A BAD SITUATION WHICH THEIR ACTION IN ALLOWING ROLAND TAKE REFUGEES FROM CAMPS HELPED TO CREATE.

3. WE HOPE TO ENCOURAGE THIS COURSE OF ACTION BY REQUESTING TO INTERVIEW ALL THOSE ABOARD THE ROLAND AND ALSO TO REQUEST THAT THE INTERVIEWS BE HELD AT THE CAMP, IF THE 195 ARE NOT ALREADY THERE BY THE TIME BUTCHER AND ANDERSON ARRIVE. THERE SHOULD BE LITTLE DIFFICULTY IN HOUSING THE ROLAND GROUP AT THE CAMP AS IT ORIGINALLY HELD 350 REFUGEES AND ONLY 118 REMAIN THERE AT LAST COUNT.

4. WCRP OFFICIAL HOMER JACK, ON HIS WAY TO NEW YORK VIA SINGAPORE TOLD US MARCH 21 THAT HE HAD LEFT THE ROLAND THAT MORNING AT ITS ANCHORAGE AT KAPAS ISLAND JUST OFF THE COAST FROM TRENGGANU. HE SAID THAT HE "WAS PLAYING IT STRAIGHT" WITH GOM OFFICIALS AND SAID HE LEFT SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS THAT THE SHIP WAS TO REMAIN AT KAPAS WHETHER OR NOT THE REFUGEES ARE REQUIRED TO RETURN ABOARD.

5. ROLAND SITUATION AND REFUGEE PROBLEM IN GENERAL POSSIBLY AMELIORATED WITH THE DEPARTURE MARCH 19 OF 172 REFUGEES BY CHARTER FLIGHT FOR AUSTRALIA. OF LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THIS GROUP, 74 WERE OFF THE ROLAND AND 98 FROM EAST COAST CAMPS. GOM OFFICIALS, EAGER TO MAINTAIN LOW PROFILE ON REFUGEE DEPARTURE, HAD FINAL PROCESSING OF AUSTRALIA-BOUND GROUP CONDUCTED IN THE LITTERED CARGO AREA OF THE KUALA LUMPUR AIRPORT. WE UNDERSTAND THAT HIGH-RANKING NSC OFFICIAL OSMAN ABDULLAH, OFFICER IN CHARGE OF REFUGEE AFFAIRS, RECEIVED CAUSTIC UPBRAIDING FROM THE ACCOMPANYING SENIOR AUSTRALIAN IMMIGRATION OFFICIAL AT THE "DISGUSTING" MANNER IN WHICH THE GOM "TREATED THE REFUGEES LIKE ANIMALS". ABDULLAH TOOK THE CRITICISM AS A PERSONAL INSULT AND, WE HEAR, WAS BROUGHT TO VERGE OF TEARS BY INCIDENT. (COMMENT: WE ARE CONCERNED THIS MAY CAUSE ABDULLAH TO TAKE HARDER LINE ON REFUGEE ISSUE.)

6. AFTER COMPLETION OF THE TRENGGANU INTERVIEWS, ANDERSON, WITH ONE LOCAL EMPLOYEE WILL PROCEED SOUTH DOWN THE COAST TO SEVERAL CAMPS HOUSING REFUGEES: KUANTAN (83), PEKAN, (WHERE A NEW GROUP OF 30 LANDED

ABOUT 2 WEEKS AGO), AND MERSING (118). THE UNHCR
HAS RECEIVED WORD THAT THERE MAY BE AS MANY AS 200
HERETOFORE UNREPORTED REFUGEES AT KUALA ROMPIN. BOTH
WE AND THE UNHCR ARE TRYING TO CONFIRM THIS REPORT.
IF TRUE, TAKEN WITH THE NEW ARRIVALS AT PEKAN, IT
WOULD APPREAR THE "BOAT CASE" SEASON IS WELL UNDERWAY.
UNDERHILL

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Message Attributes

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Control Number: n/a
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Sent Date: 23-Mar-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
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